



**EVERETT ROWING ASSOCIATION  
SAFETY MANUAL**

Updated 09/14/2022

## Safety Manual

1. Objective
  - a. Communication and Compliance
  - b. Liability
2. Delineation of responsibilities
  - a. Club Responsibilities
  - b. Coach Responsibilities
  - c. Coxswain Responsibilities
  - d. Athlete Responsibilities
3. Conditions Necessary for Rowing
4. Preparedness for Rowing
  - a. Rowing Equipment
  - b. Coaching Launch
  - c. Facility Safety
5. Special Situations
  - a. Visibility
  - b. Fog
  - c. Wind
  - d. Lightning/Thunderstorms
  - e. Air Quality Index
  - f. Cold weather rowing
  - g. Bridges
6. Response to Accidents
  - a. Alternative Docking Sites
  - b. Addressing Emergency Situations
7. On Water Emergency Responses
  - a. Shell Damage or Rower Injured
  - b. Person/Rower Overboard
  - c. Shell Swamping / Capsizing
8. Weather Related Health Emergencies
  - a. Hypothermia
  - b. Heat Related Emergencies
9. Incident Reporting & Tracking

## **1. Objective**

The purpose of ERA's Safety Manual is to establish, maintain and disseminate the Club's safety guidelines and ultimately ensure the safe operation of the Association at all times. This guide governs all boat handling and on water rowing at any facility or location that members use while sanctioned by the Association. The Safety Manual is maintained by the Safety Committee and the Executive Director. The policies and procedures in this manual shall be adhered to in all respects. Nevertheless; blind adherence shall not replace the exercise of sound judgment. The Safety Committee is composed of the Director, a board member who is the Safety Officer and other members of the Association that have been named by the Director and Safety Officer.

The Everett Rowing Association considers safety to be the priority of all rowers, coxswains and coaches. The policies and procedures in this Safety Manual are written for everyone's benefit.

Throughout the manual the use of the following terms are as follows:

- Note: An operating procedure, practice, or condition, etc., that must be emphasized.
- Shall: A procedure that is mandatory.
- Should: A procedure that is recommended.
- May or Need Not: A procedure that is optional.
- Will: Indicates futurity and never indicates any degree of requirement for application of a procedure.

## **Communications and Compliance**

Our safety procedures and policies are documented on the ERA website [www.everettrowing.com](http://www.everettrowing.com) and in the Member's Guide also available on the website.

Members are required to comply with the procedures and policies in this Safety Manual.

Disciplinary action may follow member or staff violation of safety policy. The first violation of club safety policy will result in a written reprimand. The second violation will result in a suspension of rowing privileges or coaching duties. The third violation will result in a cancellation of membership and accompanying privileges or a termination of employment.

## **Liability**

Liability insurance shall always be in force; if for any unforeseen circumstance there is a lapse in coverage all club activities are to be suspended. The Director is responsible for ensuring that the policy is in force and is required to keep the Safety Officer informed of the policy.

Individual members are responsible for their own medical clearance; the Everett Rowing Association / USRowing waiver clears the Everett Rowing Association of liability for individual members.

Every member, guest and coach who participates in club-sponsored on-the-water rowing or erg sessions shall sign a USRowing "Release of Liability" every year. The Executive Director or designee shall maintain a log of signed forms and the original signed copies.

## **2. Delineation of Responsibilities**

### **Club Responsibilities**

Executive Director and Safety Officer

Are responsible for ensuring the policies and procedures of this Safety Manual are followed.

Should conduct a quarterly "Safety Meeting" at a minimum. Safety Meetings will also need to be held in the event of an incident report.

Has the authority to cancel rowing activities at any time if it is deemed that policies and procedures are not being followed or if any unsafe condition exists.

Shall ensure all members have acknowledged reading the Safety Manual before participating in on-the-water rowing activities.

Should ensure that for each coach, rower, and coxswain at the boathouse is registered and has a record of the following:

- Name
- Date of Birth
- Address
- Phone Number
- Emergency Contact Information

Shall ensure all rowing equipment is maintained with safety in mind and that unsafe equipment be prominently marked and removed from use.

Shall schedule rowing on the Snohomish River from February through Thanksgiving. Rowing will be allowed December through January if conditions are favorable per the policies set forth in the ERA's Safety Guide.

Shall hire and train instructors (coaches) in the correct supervision of athletes in a marine environment. Shall maintain current CPR, AED, First Aid, and Washington Boating certification for coaches and other staff. Shall maintain a first aid kit in a communal, well-identified location.

Everett Rowing Association will maintain an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) to be available at the boathouse and a selection of ERA attended regattas.

May remove coaches, coxswains or athletes from their duties if they are deemed a threat to safety. Shall ensure organizational liability insurance is in full force at all times.

The Safety Committee should provide regular safety tips to staff and participants.

All members who participate in any on-the-water rowing shall complete a swim test, certified by an accredited lifeguard. The Safety Committee is responsible for ensuring currency.

### **Coach Responsibilities**

Shall maintain current CPR, AED, First Aid and Washington Boater Safety training certifications.

Shall not supervise training sessions while under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, illegal substances, or while abusing prescription medications.

Shall be responsible for knowing the number of boats on the water during a rowing session and that all boats have returned to the dock before ending the session.

Shall ensure that each launch has all of the safety equipment that is listed in the "Coaches Launch" section of the Safety Manual.

Ensure safe conduct of operations during a rowing session and that coxswains are observing the traffic patterns.

Have the authority to cancel rowing activities at any time if it is deemed that procedures and policies are not being followed or if any unsafe condition exists.

Are responsible for providing assistance to any capsized boat -- even if from another sport or a pleasure boat. Coaches are reminded to stop at a safe distance and offer assistance. Approach with caution and in a controlled manner. Be aware of your prop!

Should conduct seasonal coxing/ bowing clinics for new members and any continuing members who need a refresher.

Shall review coxing/bowing performance seasonally to make sure everyone has the basic capabilities and thorough knowledge of safety procedures to keep the crew and boat safe.

Coaches may relieve athletes of coxswain duty if he/she is deemed a threat to safety.

Should ensure that all coxies are properly equipped and informed of safety procedures in the event of an emergency.

Shall wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) while operating a safety launch.

Shall ensure each guest, staff or athletes riding in the launch is wearing a Personal Flotation Device (PFD).

Check weather and tides prior to commencing the session. Monitor evolving conditions throughout the session.

Shall ensure that Coxswains and Crew abide by the specific rules below. Monitor other boat traffic.

Communicate with other coaches about conditions and river usage.

### **Coxswain Responsibilities**

Are responsible for the safety of the crew, the shell and others around the shell from the moment the shell is lifted from the racks until it is returned to the racks.

Shall not participate in training sessions while under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, illegal substances, or while abusing prescription medications.

Shall carry a first aid kit and wrenches in a coxswain bag.

Shall ensure bowball and stern ports/hatches are secure before launching.

Ensure that a properly outfitted cox box is in the boat when it leaves the dock.

Ensure that heel tie-downs are in place and the heel of shoes cannot be raised more than three inches.

Are responsible for following the traffic pattern at all times. The coxswain is responsible for being aware of and avoiding other boat traffic, which may or may not be following the traffic pattern.

When rowing at facilities other than the Snohomish River, become thoroughly familiar with and adhere to the local traffic patterns and safety procedures.

Shall wear an ERA issued PFD (personal flotation device) during practice.

Shall bring a cell phone on the water as a backup to the coach's, and to summon aid in the event the coach needs rescue.

A coxswain may be relieved of coxing duty if s/he is deemed a threat to safety.

## **Athlete Responsibilities**

All participants in Everett Rowing Association sanctioned rowing activities, guests and coaches:

Shall familiarize themselves with all the contents of this Safety Manual, the Everett Rowing Association's Member's Guide and any safety guidelines and notices that the Association provides via written or oral communication.

Shall follow all of the Association's rules and Snohomish River traffic patterns at all times.

Shall follow the instructions of the Association's coaching staff, coxswains and Safety Committee. Should consult a physician about engaging in any form of exercise, including rowing and indoor training.

Shall notify the Safety Committee, coaches and coxswains if they have any medical condition that could impair their ability to row or that requires special attention.

Shall take appropriate precautions to address any such conditions while participating in Everett Rowing sanctioned activities. This may include taking medications or devices (e.g., asthma inhalers, EpiPen) in the boat or while traveling.

Shall not participate in training sessions while under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, illegal substances, or while abusing prescription medications.

Should inform the coaches, Executive Director or Safety Officer member of any unsafe condition or unsafe equipment they observe.

Are encouraged to share any safety suggestions they may have with the Safety Officer or Executive Director.

No shell owned by the Everett Rowing Association shall be on the water without a safety launch operated by a staff member or qualified designee approved by the Executive Director.

Shall notify the coxswain immediately if they see a hazard or possible collision that they believe the coxswain does not see, or if the coxswain is in violation of adhering to the standard traffic pattern without explaining to the crew their intentions. An emergency supersedes the rule for a crew member not to speak in a moving boat.

Shall notify the coxswain or coach if they believe they hear thunder or see lightning.

Private Boat Owners shall record their departure and subsequent return in the club logbook.

## **Safety in the Boat**

- Before entering the boat, ensure all outboard oars are on the water.
- Rowers should be quiet and attentive to the coxswain or coach.
- Rowers should keep at least one hand on the oar while on the water.
- After docking do not pull an outboard oar in until everyone is out of the boat.
- Oarlocks shall remain locked until everyone is out of the shell.

- Shall follow the established traffic pattern on the Snohomish River or location of the ERA activity.
- Rowers should wear brightly colored gear to aid in visibility.

### **3. Conditions Necessary for Rowing**

No earlier than 1 hour before sunrise, and no later than 1 hour after sunset. The Snohomish River must not be in flood stage.

There must be at least 150 feet visibility in the event of fog. Ice must not be present on the river.

If thunder or lightning is seen or heard, no boats may launch for 30 minutes.

All boats on the water when thunder or lightning is present must land as soon as possible.

Safety launch on the water, operated by an approved launch driver, and outfitted as described below.

Snohomish River must be free of significant obstructions, including logs and other debris. Wind must be below 15 MPH for experienced crews; below 12 MPH for inexperienced crews. The Snohomish River, or location of rowing, must be free of “whitecap” waves.

The ratio of boats per coach should be no more than 2 eights, 5 fours, 8 pairs/ doubles and 12 singles. These limits may be less for coaches with less experience. Coaches should not launch if they are not comfortable about the number of athletes they are responsible for.

All boats should remain with the responsible coach/safety launch at an appropriate distance so that they can be supervised/observed and immediate assistance can be rendered if required; USE SOUND JUDGMENT.

Rowing shells and coaching launches will follow the Snohomish River’s traffic patterns and local municipal code.

Members and guests (who are middle school age or older) who have signed a USRowing Liability Waiver may ride in a launch with the coach’s permission. Riders shall wear a PFD (personal flotation device).

Coaches shall have checked the weather and tidal forecast prior to departing the boathouse, and monitor conditions during the session.

### **4. Preparedness for Rowing Rowing Equipment**

It is the coxswain’s responsibility that their shell should not leave the dock unless the following equipment is either installed or onboard:

- Bow ball
- Cell phone and radio
- Coxswain tool bag with the following wrenches: (1) 6” adjustable wrench, (1) ½” wrench, (1) 7/16” wrench
- Quick-release shoes with Velcro closure and heel tie-downs
- Working bow and stern light if launched in hours of darkness or the possibility exists the shell might not return to the dock before dark- Not Applicable for Langus Park.



## **Coaching Launch**

The only true safety device or practice other than common sense is a support/coaching launch. In the event of an emergency a well prepared safety launch can assist the individuals in question and transport them to safety.

The majority of our coaching launches are 14ft Voyager Smoker Craft Hulls. These hulls have a 4 person or 550lb max, with a max load capacity (person, motor, and gear) of 960 lbs and a max motor size of 35 HP. We have 9.9-20HP motors on our launches.

The smaller launches are Smokercrafts that are 3 person or 400 lbs max, with a max load capacity (person, motor, and gear) of 700 lbs and a max motor size of 15 HP. We have 9.9 motors on the little launches.

Each coaching launch contains:

- Mobile Phone
- Waterproof Box
- 20 USCG-Approved Personal Flotation Devices Type II
- 2 throw seat cushions
- Hand Bilge Pump
- Rescue Throw Bag (can be doubled as a tow-rope).
- Air Horn
- 20 Emergency Mylar Rescue Blankets
- Megaphone
- Ladder
- Paddle

The launch operator shall be responsible for ensuring these items are onboard the coaching launch prior to an on-the-water session.

## **Facility Safety**

Athletes should exercise caution when crossing the street. Wear brightly colored clothing and walk with a buddy.

All coaches and athletes should work to maintain a clean facility to eliminate trip hazards. Equipment should be put away neatly after use. Personal gear should be stowed in lockers, or out of the common path of travel.

Spilled liquids should be cleaned up immediately.

All members should be cognizant of basic safety practices – including hydration, blood on the oar handles, dressing appropriately for the weather.

The Association recommends that athletes warm-up and stretch before indoor or on-water training sessions.

## **5. Special Situations**

### **Limited Visibility**

The greatest danger while rowing is collision caused by limited vision or carelessness. Great care should be taken when rowing around sunrise and sunset. Minimize conversation. Be careful not to get too close to shore or known hazards. Wear brightly colored clothing to increase your visibility to other river users. All boats launching during hours of darkness shall launch with a working bow and stern light, not applicable at Langus Park.

### **Fog**

Fog limits visibility, but also mutes sounds. If caught in fog, crews should proceed with extreme caution and appropriately slower speeds in the direction of the boathouse. Be prepared to stop quickly. If the fog is too extreme it may be better to sit still. Make noise so that other boaters can be alerted to your presence. Do not assume fog that appears to be thinning will continue to do so.

### **Wind**

Crews should return to the dock if wind increases beyond the limits stated above, or if sound judgments dictate. If wind is too great, coaches should seek an alternative docking site, as listed below.

### **Lightning/Thunderstorms**

Crews shall return immediately to the dock, or proceed immediately to shore or an alternative landing site if the boathouse is too distant. There does not have to be rain or thunder to have conditions conducive to lightning. A rapid change in temperature, hail or heavy rain can be precursors to lightning.

### **Air Quality Index**

All activities will be canceled if the AQI (air quality index) reaches 151. This is the 'unhealthy for all' threshold.

When we reach "unhealthy for sensitive individuals" (asthma, COPD, lung problems, very old/young, etc) we will do light duty at the boathouse. Sensitive groups should also consider skipping practice and remain indoors when levels reach an AQI of 101.

[Here](#) is a link to air quality information

### **Cold Weather Rowing**

Rowing when the water temperature is below 50F should only be done with great consideration. Hypothermia is a swift and incapacitating killer that strikes when the combination of cold weather and moisture work to decrease the body temperature. It can take mere minutes before an adult is incapable of helping themselves once hypothermia has set in.

Keep in mind you don't have to fall in the water to get hypothermia. Cold air temperatures and any moisture on the body (from sweat or being splashed, rain, sleet, and snow) can lead to hypothermia.

Note that the temperature of the Snohomish river water rarely goes above 50F. This makes it possible for a person in the water to quickly get hypothermia, even on a warm day.

### **Bridges:**

Single file through bridges. No stopping or turning under any bridges. Do not go through the west train bridge when a train is crossing- risk of debris falling.

## **6. Response to Accidents**

### **Alternative Docking Sites**

In the event of a sudden weather or other emergency, rowers and coaches should know where to dock on the Snohomish River or best places to land a boat.

- Dagmar's Marina
- Langus Park Boat launch
- Langus Park Rowing Dock
- Northwest river bank by "the point" Everett Side below pillings. Low bank.
- Steamboat Slough Marina (Holms Landing)
- Low dock under Highway 2
- Rotary Park Boat launch, south of Lowell Riverfront Park

*If you have an emergency needing athlete extraction take the rower to the Everett Side of the river and give location to emergency personnel.*

### **Addressing Emergency Situations**

CALL 9 – 1 – 1

- ACCIDENT REQUIRING ANY IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE
- If CPR is Necessary
- In case of an Injury or Medical Problem
- In case of a Boating Accident Involving Injury
- In Case of Fire (evacuate boathouse immediately)
- To Report a Crime

Boathouse Address / Location:

300 Smith Island Road, Everett, WA.

Langus Riverfront Park, Past Dagmars Marina

Call non- emergency (425) 407-3999

- If you are concerned about a seemingly stable individual in the park
- Suspicious circumstances in the surrounding areas of Langus park (ie the boathouse road)
- If it is not park related, and not an immediate risk to person or property.

Call Park Ranger (425) 388-2700

- A boating accident not involving injury or ERA
- Suspicious circumstances in the Langus Park
- Disruptive individuals in Langus Park

## **7. On-Water Emergencies**

All athletes, coxswains and coaches should be fully aware of what actions to take in each of the following circumstances.

### **Lost Fin**

If a shell has lost a skeg while on the water, it should return to the dock immediately under supervision of the coach

### **Rower Injured/Equipment Broken**

Anyone may give the command: "Weigh enough, hold water!" Coxswain should signal launch for assistance. Coach then will use sound judgment to either fix on the water or return to the dock under close supervision.

### **Rower Overboard**

If a rower is ejected from the boat while underway, the ejected rower should stay below the surface of the water to avoid being hit by the shell or its oars as it passes by.

The shell should stop immediately. Anyone may give the command: "Weigh enough, hold water!" The stroke may remove their oar and get it to the person in the water.

Crew and coach should ascertain if the "man overboard" is conscious or in need of first aid. People in the water should lie across the oar and remain close to the shell.

The launch picks up the person and the coach determines if the rower returns to the shell or is transported directly to the boathouse for warming or medical attention.

### **Capsizing and Swamping Situations**

If rowers egress from a swamped boat -- STAY WITH THE BOAT!

#### *Shell Taking on Water- Swamping*

If a shell takes on an abnormal amount of water, the athletes should notify the coach, who should provide hand-operated bilge pumps to the athletes. Pumping excess water out of the boat before it reaches a critical point will significantly reduce the probability of swamping or capsizing.

Shell Swamped, with Rescue Imminent Immediate command: "Weigh Enough!"

Coxswain directs rowers to untie, signals launch and unloads rowers by pairs -- starting in the middle of the boat -- as soon as possible in order to avoid damage to the boat.

Pairs should form "buddies" and keep a watch on each other. The Coxswain should buddy with the stern pair. The coach should distribute lifejackets to the athletes in the water.

Athletes with low body fat should be prioritized in cold water rescues. Until otherwise directed by the coach in the launch, **STAY WITH THE BOAT**

The coach should shuttle rowers to the nearest shore, or the shellhouse, being careful not to excessively overload the launch.

*If rescue is not imminent, take the following steps:*

At no time should any crew member leave the boat to swim to shore! A short swim can be far longer than it appears due to currents, wind, water temperature, or personal fatigue.

The shell normally will float, even if just below the surface. The oars will act as flotation devices. Rowers and coaches shall stay calm.

Rowers shall stay with the shell.

Coach or an athlete shall take a headcount.

Pair up and maintain regular one-on-one communication.

Rolling the boat hull-side up can make a stable platform to get your body out of the water.

Remove oars or place them parallel to the shell. It is dangerous to roll a shell when the athletes are near the riggers. The bow four should move to the bow of the boat. The stern four and coxswain should move to the stern of the boat

Attempt to roll the boat so that rowers can either lie on top of the hull or buddies can hold each other across the hull. Athletes can drape themselves over the hull to get their torsos out of the water, minimizing heat loss.

Rowers should make every effort to get their bodies out of the water, as heat loss occurs more rapidly in the water.

Minimize movement to minimize heat loss.

Attract attention of launches, crews or people on shore. Waving an oar is a sign of distress.

If it is feasible, the athletes also may kick-paddle the boat to shore, making sure to stay with the boat.

Recovery of a Flipped or Damaged Shell

Once all rowers who were involved in a capsizing or swamping incident are accounted for and properly taken care of, the next step is to recover the shell.

Assess the situation. Avoid situations where injury or further damage could occur. Identify who is the leader of the recovery operation.

Identify approximate wind speed and direction, current speed and direction, and other hazards.

Assemble resources: Other experienced staff, athletes, multiple launches may be required.

Decide how best to move into position to work on the shell. Move slowly!

Recover all gear that has floated away from the shell (e.g., loose oars, coxboxes, speed coaches)

*Docking a boat with no rowers:*

1. Remove the oars unless they are acting as floatation for a severely damaged shell.
2. Roll the shell upright if it is not already.
3. Loop a line through the stern- or bow-most riggers, and tie off to two points to the launch.
4. Drive the launch at a slow and controlled pace, making sure the prop is clear of the tow line.
5. Assemble others on the dock to safely land the boat.  
*The boat must be bailed (use bilge pumps) before being lifted from the water. Empty bow and stern compartments, as well as seat wells.*
6. Use extra people to lift the shell from the water to avoid injury while lifting.  
*Support any damaged parts of the shell while lifting.*

## **8. Weather Related Medical Emergencies**

### **Hypothermia**

Hypothermia is a condition that occurs when the temperature of the human body is lowered to a dangerous point due to exposure to cold and/or wet conditions. Cold temperatures and wet conditions work together to pull heat away from the body lowering the body's core temperature. Even in mild conditions, the addition of rain or submersion in cold water and can sufficiently reduce body warmth to trigger hypothermic conditions in the body. A person's condition can degrade rapidly impairing breathing and coordination making it impossible to swim or keep one's head above water. Emergency action needs to be taken no matter what the level of hypothermia.

#### *Early Hypothermia*

Symptoms: rapid shivering, numbness, loss of strength and coordination, semi consciousness.

Action: Maintain open airway. Transfer to a warm environment as soon as possible. Remove wet clothing. Use blankets to help warm individual and put inside warm room or warm vehicle. Warm torso area first. Seek medical attention.

### *Profound Hypothermia*

Symptoms: Person will be pale, stiff, and cold. Unresponsive to stimuli, and possibly unconscious. Little or no cardiac or respiratory activity will be present.

Action: Move or manipulate as gently as possible. Prevent further heat loss, but Do Not attempt to rewarm. Maintain open airway, and activate EMS procedures. Call for emergency help (9-1-1) immediately!

### **Heat-Related Emergencies**

Higher temperatures and high humidity can lead to heat-related illnesses. As humidity rises, the body's ability to cool through sweating is diminished since evaporation is limited. The best way to avoid heat-related injuries is to practice at cooler times of the day: early morning or late afternoon. The body needs time to acclimate to increased temperatures. Intake of fluids is also key and should be encouraged.

Dehydration further impairs the body's ability to cool off. There are two major heat-related illnesses to be aware of: heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

#### *Heat Exhaustion*

Early Symptoms: heavy sweating, cramps, tiredness, weakness, malaise, mild decrease in performance.

Action: rest and fluid replacement.

Advanced Symptoms: profuse sweating, impaired judgment, emotional changes. Action: If there is mild temperature elevation, an ice pack may be used to help cool the body to normal temperatures. Several days rest may be necessary and rehydration is a priority.

#### *Heat Stroke*

Symptoms: confusion, nausea, vomiting, seizures. The victim loses consciousness. Body temperature rises as high as 106. Skin is dry and clammy.

Action: Get medical help immediately! Lower body temp by immersing in water, maintain the horizontal position of the victim. Stop treatment when the victim is conscious.

## **9. Incident Reporting and Tracking**

In the event of an incident resulting in equipment damage, injury or that requires assistance from emergency services (aid car, police, fire department, park ranger) an incident report shall be filled out that day on iCrew. Every active member and coach can fill out an incident report. In the event that there is damage to equipment, there shall also be a damage report filed in iCrew.

## Safety Manual Consent Form

---

By signing this I consent that

- I have been given a Safety Manual and I know where to find it on the website and in the Coaches Drive.
  
- I am responsible for reading, understanding, and carrying out my responsibilities as the Coach, Administrative Assistant or Director.

Any questions I have about the Safety Manual will be brought to the Director or Head Coaches. If a policy review needs to be made, I will request a review by the Safety Committee through iCrew incident reports, the Director, or a member of the Safety Committee.

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print: \_\_\_\_\_